

NATCHITOCHES DECLARATION ON HERITAGE LANDSCAPES

27 March 2004, Natchitoches (Nak a tish) Louisiana, USA

On the occasion of the 7TH International Symposium of US/ICOMOS, *Learning from World Heritage: Lessons from International Preservation & Stewardship of Cultural & Ecological Landscapes of Global Significance*, 123 delegates from all over the United States, twelve nations and several disciplines met in Natchitoches, Louisiana, from 25 to 27 March 2004, to share experience, draw lessons and address issues surrounding the interface of nature and culture in the landscape.

The symposium benefited from the continuing reflection carried through World Heritage international and regional meetings addressing cultural landscapes, and the ICOMOS General Assembly, Zimbabwe, 2002, the World Parks Congress, Durban, South Africa, 2003, the review of IUCN categories of protected areas and the recent revision of the World Heritage Operational Guidelines merging the cultural and natural criteria.

The World Heritage Operational Guidelines were amended in 1992 to include *cultural landscapes* and it is apparent that this addition has been instrumental in focusing on the interaction of people and nature over time. Thirty-six evolved continuing or relict, designed and associative landscapes have received World Heritage listing between 1992 and 2003, recognizing their outstanding universal value. The majority of these, twenty-two, are evolved continuing landscapes where people and nature dwell together. There is a convergence of natural and cultural values in the landscape, and a growing recognition that the traditional separation of nature and culture is a hindrance to protection, and is no longer sustainable. Further, heritage landscape protection is required at the local, national and global levels in order to transmit these universally valuable heritage resources to future generations.

Considering the fundamental nature of landscape at the nexus of biodiversity and cultural diversity; taking also into consideration that a series of threats to globally important landscapes include loss of character, degradation, intense use, unregulated tourism, population shifts, economic factors, encroachment, pollution, and that our inability to fully fathom heritage landscapes is the largest threat, therefore the participants of the 7TH International Symposium adopt the following declaration of principles and recommendations, addressing them to national and local authorities as well as institutions and international organizations in particular to ICOMOS and to its partners IUCN and ICCROM.

A Concept in Evolution and an Inter-Disciplinary Commitment

Heritage landscapes are unique places that are the prime expression of the richness of the world and the diversity of its culture. Actions to deepen the understanding of the complexity of heritage landscapes, whether productive, commemorative, inspirational, rural or urban, countryside, seascapes, cityscapes, industrial landscapes, routes, or linear corridors, are needed at the international, national and regional levels. The preservation and conservation of heritage landscapes is coming into focus, but international bodies have much to do to address their complexity. Accordingly we stress the need to:

- Pursue an inter-disciplinary approach within the cultural heritage field, in concert with natural heritage professionals and organizations, to identify, document, designate and manage heritage landscapes, using a holistic model.
- Pursue global theme studies of landscape typologies, such as the project on globally important agricultural systems, in an interdisciplinary milieu.
- Strengthen the collaboration of ICOMOS and IUCN in the identification, evaluation, monitoring and periodic reporting on heritage landscapes in the context of the World Heritage Convention and other cooperative efforts.
- Press forward ICOMOS, ICCROM and IUCN training in understanding and applying the revised World Heritage Operational Guidelines to build capacity at the professional and community level.
- Improve the preparation processes for ICOMOS heritage landscape evaluation missions to include full baseline data and professional reviews.

- Develop model World Heritage nominations for heritage landscapes.
- Develop heritage landscapes model management plans to share with state parties.
- Call upon ICOMOS, the ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, especially the ICOMOS/IFLA Historic Gardens & Cultural Landscapes Committee to take a leadership role in these efforts.

Responding to Threats

Threats are multiple and pervasive and require attention.

- Recognize and pursue planning for global changes in land use that pose specific challenges to cultural landscapes, such as agricultural change and tourism pressure.
- Develop a stronger system to ensure rapid intervention and mobilizing resources for heritage landscapes under threat.
- Focus additional attention on the issues of heritage landscapes in the response to catastrophic events.
- Provide guidelines to aid in sustainable tourism for heritage landscapes.

Engaging Communities, Multiple Values, Multiple Voices

Communities and landscape are intertwined. People define and steward place shaping their lifeways through time in partnerships with the landscape. Local knowledge and traditional skills both imprint and sustain heritage landscapes and are to be studied, understood and respected in the preservation and conservation process. The full engagement of communities in the protection and sustaining of heritage landscapes is required. Accordingly we stress the need to:

- Foster the development of ICOMOS guidelines and principles of practice for the inclusion of consultative, community-based processes in the planning and management of heritage landscapes.
- Support the understanding and continuation of traditional practices in the stewardship of heritage landscapes.
- Recognize that multi-values are present in heritage landscapes and that multiple voices, including strong community engagement, need to be brought to their protection and management.
- Respect the living traditions and footprints of indigenous peoples that permeate the heritage landscape.

National & International Cooperation

Constant advocacy and promotion are required by all partners, in particular within the World Heritage system, to forge cooperative partnerships among state parties and across national boundaries. Accordingly we stress the need to:

- Use heritage landscape conservation to promote sustainable approaches to international cooperation among nations and peoples.
- Encourage nations to conduct national thematic studies of landscape types- agriculture, land and water migration routes, pilgrim trails, etc.
- Encourage international multi-national cooperation to identify and safeguard heritage landscapes that cross national boundaries.
- Provide guidelines for national legislation for the protection of cultural landscapes, to include watershed management, transboundary areas and buffer zones.
- Demonstrate, in the form of case studies and reporting, how recognition of heritage landscapes can provide economic benefits.

We respect and deeply appreciate the landscape preservation and conservation efforts that have reached fruition. Much work remains to be done and threats are urgent and pervasive. With this declaration, we call for increased commitment to the gamut of preservation and conservation planning and management efforts to preserve the universally significant heritage landscapes of our planet. We extend our thanks to all who have made this symposium a rich exchange and thank our gracious hosts in Natchitoches, Louisiana.

Adopted at the US/ICOMOS 7th International Symposium at Natchitoches, USA, 27 March 2004